

Gardens for the Future

Keeping the future in mind as we garden is essential to reaping the many benefits that can come from growing some of our own food, not the least of which is much-needed action on climate change and biodiversity.



Our [Looking Forward Project](#) calls for a determined effort to [establish gardens throughout the community](#) coupled with observation and [monitoring of foodshed health](#) in, over, under, and around gardens, farms, and ranches as a strategy to engage the broader public in addressing environmental issues including climate and biodiversity.

(See resources at www.HCFS.org —> [Healthy Foodsheds](#) —> [Looking Forward](#))

Why is this important?

- Growing some of one's own food enhances personal and community self-reliance in response to an uncertain future.
- Gardeners are more likely to support local farmers and ranchers and pay fair prices for what they don't grow themselves, furthering localization.
- Growing your own food can help develop healthier food choices.
- [Observing nature](#) while growing your own food can develop [more sustainable food choices](#) and more awareness of climate and biodiversity changes happening now in our foodsheds.
- [Monitoring and reporting](#) pollinators, weather, seasonal happenings (phenology), and other natural processes as Citizen Scientists can help scientists develop greater understanding and solutions.
- Monitoring climate and biodiversity in our local foodshed can increase awareness of the need for climate and biodiversity protections beyond food.

How can we “Garden for the Future”?

- **Get serious about producing food:** It admittedly depends on your location, time, and resources, but striving to grow as much food as you can will serve you well whatever changes are in store. Don’t wait until you feel sure of yourself to start to garden—learn what you can, talk to fellow gardeners, and be ready to make a few mistakes, but start growing! Support garden-friendly policies and summer care for school gardens.
- **Support gardens:** [at all schools, preschools, and other institutions as well.](#)
- **Be observant:** “Watch while you work.” [Keep track](#) of pollinators, soil organisms, birds, beneficial insects, and seasonal occurrences (phenology). Share your observations with kids, fellow growers, and even with scientists through [Citizen Science programs](#).
- **Grow with the Wild:** Following [Wild School Garden](#) approaches for kids (and for any gardener) and [Wild Farming and Ranching](#) strategies combines astute observation with enlightened management for profound ecological, educational, and production benefits.
- **Support local producers:** Get to know local farmers and ranchers, buy from them what you don’t grow yourself, learn from them, and support them as loyal customers and as voters so we have a reliable food supply into the future. [Get more of their food into all our schools and preschools.](#)
- **Care for others:** Share food and seeds with others, and “[grow a row](#)” for the needy. Respect and nurture wildlife and the natural processes that make growing food possible. Show our children we care about them and their future.
- **Adapt:** Start now looking at seeds, fruit tree varieties, water use, fertility, and management [techniques that will work well as our climate changes.](#)
- **Mitigate:** Make sure we are [reducing greenhouse gasses as we garden](#)—much less fossil fuel use, fewer trips to the grocery, efficient water use, healthy soils, less food waste, etc.
- **Get active beyond food:** Now that you are addressing climate and biodiversity through local food, continue on in other sectors—renewables, recycling, transport, energy efficiency, wild lands conservation, habitat protection, etc.

Local food is the low-hanging fruit for broader citizen engagement in serious action on climate and biodiversity—and “Gardening for the Future” is a great way to start.